

Release Date: For Immediate Release

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SCORE Helped WSI Internet Consulting and Education Over a Few Bumps in the Road to Success

ST. LOUIS—Ron Adelman knows the restaurant business. With a degree in accounting and more than 20 years working for a variety of restaurant owners and franchisers, Ron has experienced the food service business as an employee of small, one-owner businesses to vice president of operations for several multinational corporations.

Ron's first job began with a steakhouse in Fort Lauderdale, Fla., which he helped to build to revenues of \$1 million plus only to have the owner end up in bankruptcy. He moved to The Ground Round, a Howard Johnson restaurant chain, where as regional manager he spent the next 10 years opening restaurants, training others to manage the stores, and overseeing the operations. However, as revenues and profits increased, corporate sold out.

For the next few years, Ron experienced the same circumstances; he worked hard to help build thriving businesses only to watch as the owners go into bankruptcy, corporate investors cash in on his hard work, or as is so common in the food business, others take over the companies. With each change in ownership, he looked for additional opportunities to learn more about the food businesses and becoming a better financial manager, but he also was concerned about his future. He knew he had the experience to run his own show so he opened a brew pub in Dayton, Ohio, but that business and several other attempts at making a long-term success of the food business did not happen.

Discouraged, Ron knew he did not want to stay in the food business where bankruptcies, corporate raiders, and little control over his future appeared to be the norm. How, he wondered, does a 20-year veteran of the food business start over?

Ron took a year off and began to search for a business of his own; one unrelated to the food business, but where he would be able to make use of his extensive management experience. He knew changing his career path was not so much a matter of learning new rules as to applying the ones he had already learned. He began looking for something uncomplicated, requiring few employees and no expensive equipment, little inventory, and modest startup capital. Freed from the persistent pressure of a job, he began researching for a new start. His research led him to WSI.

Spotting new opportunities is not always easy, but when Ron read that WSI, headquartered in Toronto, Canada, was ranked the #1 Internet service business in the world and was the 14th fastest growing franchise in the United States, he became very interested. He discovered that for the fifth straight year, WSI had been featured in the Franchise 500 by *Entrepreneur Magazine*.

He especially was attracted to idea of being a locally owned business while being associated with an international web development organization.

In 2001, Ron invested \$30,000 to become one of WSI's 700 worldwide franchisees Internet Business Consultants. Soon he began working from his office in St. Peters, Mo., after completing what Ron describes as "the most complete on going, and comprehensive training and certification program I have ever experienced". Within months, he had recovered his franchise investment.

Today, WSI offers an extensive array of Internet services, including web design, web marketing, video e-mail, live streaming video, and website hosting and search engine optimization. WSI believes that a client must collaborate with an organization that can bring to a business the benefit of a comprehensive, well-developed Specialized Internet Business Strategy rather than disparate Internet services.

Ron had heard of SCORE several years earlier and decided to call them and in October 2003, he met with SCORE volunteer Bill Deemer, a retired insurance executive with a successful career in marketing, business development, sales and management. The choice was a perfect fit. Bill immediately recognized Ron's greatest asset was his ability to relate to people—a must for any startup—and for the next year met bi-weekly to discuss a time management, resource development, and marketing. Ron described his year talking with Bill as "going to a business psychiatrist".

Ron is happy with his career change. WSI has continued to grow expanding into several new Internet marketing services. For the past year, Ron has been designated as "Ambassador Coach" by WSI, conducting monthly training seminars for fellow Internet consultants around the globe.

Clearly, Ron made the right choice selecting WSI for his new career. His company growth has been very impressive, reporting that his revenues have doubled every year since 2001. Now he has control over his future; a future that continues to look bright and profitable.

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